

Monument Avenue, 2200 Block
Richmond
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1302

HABS
VA,
44-RICH,
121 -

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Building Survey
National Park Service
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MONUMENT AVENUE, 2200 BLOCK

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Location: 2200 block of Monument Avenue, between Allison and Strawberry streets,
Richmond, Virginia.

History and Description:

Between Allison and Strawberry streets, the 2200 block is the first land beyond the Allen estate to become part of Monument Avenue. After Monument Avenue was widened west of Allison Street to 140' (from the original 80' of Franklin), the lots were shortened from 150' to 130' in depth, and the alleys shifted from 20' to 15' wide as the property lines were pushed back. Most of the block was built during the 1910s, with the larger corner lots on the south side standing empty until after 1925. Despite the short developmental time span, the north and south sides demonstrate remarkable differences in scale and style.

The closest thing on Monument Avenue to a series of coordinated, speculatively built row houses was erected on the 2200 block in the space of a few years, 1910-18. It was unusual for one developer to retain control of more than 100' of frontage on the avenue; by the time most houses went up, lots were often distributed among dozens of individuals. However, even on the 2200 block, the row houses are only found on the south side, and are visually punctuated by a church at the corner of Allison, an elaborate Mediterranean-style apartment complex on the east end, and a large apartment building in the middle of the block. On the north side of the 2200 block, development proceeded in a more typical fashion, resulting in a number of Colonial Revival three-story town houses--most of them built around 1910--along with the grand residences commonly perceived as standard on Monument Avenue.

The earliest house on the block, at No. 2226, was built in 1905. Like some of the earlier three-story town houses on the 1600 block, it has a two-story bay, a false mansard roof (here without a hip), and arched windows at the first and third floors. The arches are all accented by a rowlock of bricks and keystones painted white. Transoms top all windows except at the second-floor bay; the side window and fanlight over the door are stained glass.

Early ownership of No. 2226 is somewhat unclear, but apparently N. W. Bowe, as a trustee for Adeline Brauer, acquired the property in July 1905 as the result of a suit between the Allison and Addison real estate interests. In the 1905 city directory, 2226 W. Franklin's occupants are listed as Philip C. Schloss and Frederick C. Brauer, president and manager of the Brauer Cattle Company; from 1906 to 1915 Brauer alone is listed. In 1918 he moved to Brooklyn, New York; in the same year R. H. Harwood purchased the property for \$11,000 and sold it to the Laburnum Corporation, which in turn sold it to Henry Alexander White from Columbia, South Carolina. Henry and his wife, Fannie B. W. White, occupied the house, which stayed in the family until 1948, when Fannie's sister sold it.

Four other three-story residences were built on the 2200 block, all on the north side, between 1908 and 1911. Unlike town houses on the 2000 block, which for the most part emphasize a flat facade, these use various methods to visually break up their rectangular mass.

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Considering the short timespan, close spatial proximity, and common vocabulary of Italianate and Colonial Revival styles, the detailing on each is remarkably different.

At No. 2206, striped awnings (once a common feature on Fan District houses) add to the rhythms created by limestone beltcourses, window surrounds, keystones, and the balustrades on a full-width one-story porch. The house occupies an unusually large percentage of its lot. A. C. Higginbotham designed the house for Emanuel H. Gunst. John Bagby occupied No. 2206 from 1911 until at least 1930.

Differing window treatments at No. 2220 include two pairs of arched windows on the third floor, a bowed oriel on the second, and a triple window with elliptical fanlight on the first. Another window, remodelled, sits over the Corinthian-columned entry porch. Architect C. K. Howell designed the house for Harry S. Binswanger, who lived at No. 2220 from 1910 until 1930, when Rebecca W. Binswanger is listed.

Although the roof of No. 2218 is technically a mansard, the house reads as a three-story town house because of the full-sized pedimented dormer windows. Classical detailing includes limestone quoins, jack arches, and a shouldered architrave around the second-floor French doors. An oversized entry porch with filleted corners attaches to the two-story bay. Like his neighbors, the first resident of No. 2218, Leroy S. Cohen, lived there for more than twenty years. Scarborough and Howell were the architects.

In the house at No. 2222 a gambrel roof tops the familiar two-bay two-story form, a fairly unusual combination on Monument Avenue. H. S. Binswanger occupied this house in 1908 before he moved to No. 2220; Leon Wallerstein lived at No. 2222 from 1911 until 1924.

The Addison at No. 2236, built by 1910, is one of several apartment buildings on Monument Avenue designed to blend in with the one-family houses around it. A single entry, full-width porch with deck above, and differing window treatments on all three floors help disguise its three-family design. In plan, however, the long rectangular block of No. 2236 is similar to other apartments on the street.

Also built about 1910 were four two-and-a-half-story residences--Nos. 2208, 2216, 2200, and 2204--that suggest a more suburban approach to the street, with low hipped rooflines and a horizontal emphasis. Two houses with the same facade massing at Nos. 2200 and 2216 sit on 57'- and 40'-wide lots, respectively. Each has an entry gable flanked by a bay of equal width, with single dormer above. While they differ in detailing--No. 2216 has a triple window on the first floor, and a bowed oriel over the entry; No. 2200 features a wrap-around terrace, and French doors onto the porch deck--each can be read as two-thirds of a Colonial mansion, modified to fit the streetscape of the 1910s. In fact, the "missing" wing on No. 2200 is almost supplied visually by the corner view incorporating the side facade on Allison. Oils wholesaler and land speculator R. Henry Harwood bought 155' of land at the corner of Monument and Allison in 1907 for \$22,800, and built a house on the corner by 1911, when he moved in. In 1941 the Harwoods sold the house to Elizabeth D. Merritt, who sold it again in 1943 to Mabel S. Saville. In 1959, the Virginia Missionary Society bought the property, selling it to the present owners in 1980. The other house, No. 2216, was designed by Scarborough and Howell and built in 1909-10.

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Grandier than No. 2200 and sitting on a 57'-wide lot is No. 2204, originally owned by Mary D. Barksdale. Most prominent are the elaborate one-story Doric porches, one at the entry and another on the eastern side of the house. The side porch emphasizes the three-bay width of the house, as does the hipped roof, while tall side chimneys and two pedimented dormers accent the height of the building. Architect Albert F. Hunt designed this building, completed in 1909.

The house at No. 2208 is the only one on Monument Avenue to show a significant Prairie-style influence. With its double-bracketed, exaggerated eaves, long four-light dormer, low-hipped roof, light-colored Roman brick, full-width porch, and cottage windows, 2208 is an anomaly in Richmond. Still, the house contributes a certain Colonial Revival symmetry and detailing to the general character of the block. Emanuel H. Gunst, a wholesale liquor dealer who lived on North Harrison Street, bought the lot at No. 2208 in 1909 for \$8,145, and built his house by 1910. He also built the house next door at No. 2206 as a rental. The Gunst family owned No. 2208 through the 1930s; Emanuel's widow Hattie L. Gunst sold it in 1940 to Wilbur M. Havens, who sold it in 1945 to Emmett E. Perkinson. The house stayed in the Perkinson family until 1962.

The last two houses on the north side were built next to each other in 1913 and 1914, at Nos. 2230 and 2234, respectively. Some Prairie influence shows in the latter, with its hipped roof, single wide dormer, and wide eaves, but the horizontality is less exaggerated than at No. 2208. C. B. Richardson had the house built and lived there for several decades. D. Wiley Anderson designed No. 2230 for Moses I. Binswanger; its green tile roof and elaborate dormers place it as a contemporary of the Anderson houses on the 2700 block. Sited on a 76'-wide lot, No. 2230 is the only house on the block with a side yard, a luxury in contrast to the tightly spaced houses across the street.

Harvey C. Brown developed most of the south side of the 2200 block. Built as several separate ventures, the houses on the odd side of the 2200 block are actually not all attached, and they vary in both plan and facade. Monument Avenue houses rarely share common walls; a distance between buildings was required for most subdivisions. However, the eleven houses that form the character of the south side of the block read as a group; all are brick Colonial Revival town houses, arranged in a series of units with consistent fenestration patterns and matching roof and cornice lines. All are two-and-a-half stories, with gabled dormers and stepped parapets flanking false mansard roofs. Lot widths are uneven, ranging between 20' and 30'.

Brown's first venture was two double houses at Nos. 2209-11 and 2231-33, built in 1910. Here he hired contractor George D. Priddy; for the subsequent developments, Brown himself is listed as builder. The double house at No. 2209-11 is distinctive for the matching five-light bowed oriels at the second floor. Both sides have large Palladian dormers and separate but identical full-width columned porches. The fire wall is visible only as a roof parapet, and the roofs are subtly distinguished by slight variations in the fish-scale shingle patterns. Harvey C. Brown lived at No. 2209 from 1911 until 1914. A 1910 building permit lists Brown as the owner of all four of these buildings, but according to deed records, at least, No. 2209-11 was owned by Mary Etta Brown, Harvey's mother. The Browns sold No. 2211 three months after it was built to Morton B. Rosenbaum, who lived there until 1916. In 1919, John D. Clothier, secretary/treasurer of the Hopkins Furniture Company, bought the property, transferring it in 1924 to his wife, Fanny

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Clothier. The Clothiers are not listed in the 1927 city directory, and the principal of a leaf-tobacco company is living at No. 2211. In 1933 the Clothiers took out an \$8,000 loan on the house; when they defaulted in 1937, the property was sold at auction for \$6,000.

At the same time, Harvey C. Brown built the double house at No. 2231-33. Each side has three dormers, lined up with the second-floor windows, and a triple window below. Whereas No. 2209-11 were mirror images, No. 2231-33 are duplicates, with matching entrance porches. No resident is listed in the city directory for No. 2231 until 1911 or for No. 2233 until 1912. The estimated construction cost for the four row houses was \$40,000 in 1910.

Brown's next houses on the block were built in 1913 at No. 2227-29. These, too, have tile roofs, although the building permit specifies slate and tin. Each is on a 28' lot, slightly larger than their neighbors, with steep roof lines matching those on No. 2231-33. Both have two unequal bays and dormers, with slight differences in the fenestration. Construction cost was estimated at \$20,000 for the two; the architect was I. T. Skinner. The next year, Brown built another double house at No. 2205-07, since demolished. It was apparently more modest than No. 2227-29, as it cost only \$12,000 to build.

Brown next built the four attached houses--Nos. 2217, 2219, 2221 and 2223--between April 1916 and February 1917, also designed by I. T. Skinner. Each has two tall dormers; the three second-floor windows, with shutters, cover the entire width of the building. Original shed-roof porches are missing on Nos. 2219 and 2221, and the cornice has been replaced on No. 2217. The roof material on the building permit is listed as tin and slate, but three of the four houses now have tile roofs. Alterations over time and individual paint jobs now distinguish the four houses, but originally they formed a symmetrical composition. None was occupied until 1918 when H. C. Brown is listed at No. 2223; the rest apparently stood empty until 1919. Brown and his wife, Hester Cabell Tabb Brown, sold No. 2217 in 1918 to the Laburnum Corporation, the real estate group headed by the Bryan brothers. Jonathan Bryan lived there until 1922, when Ellen Beirne Blair Wilson bought the property. Richard T. Wilson, a clerk, is listed at No. 2217 in 1922; apparently the Wilson family then rented the house until Richard T. Wilson, Jr., sold it in 1949. The property changed hands eight times in the next forty years.

In 1917, before he lived at No. 2223, Brown lived next door at No. 2225, which was built in 1915--another I. T. Skinner design. Although similar to the houses on either side, No. 2225 stands alone, with a roofline below those to the west of it and slightly higher than those to the east. With its three dormers perfectly aligned with the first- and second-floor windows, and regular brickwork (every other header on an English bond is glazed), No. 2225 is the most box-like of the row.

Breaking up the row houses are larger buildings that vary greatly in both scale and style, but they work together to keep the 2200 block a logical section of Monument Avenue. Cutting Nos. 2209-11 off from the other row houses is No. 2213, a three-story town house more in keeping with the other side of the street. Like most of the north side, it was built by 1910 and was the first structure on the south side. Albert F. Hunt designed the building for owner Sam Bendheim. Although at 33' wide its lot is only slightly larger than the row houses, No. 2213 reads as a much bigger house, with its full-width elliptical porch and four-bay third story. Both the

roofline and the second story are slightly higher on No. 2213 than on the neighboring houses.

The Brooke Apartments, at No. 2215, were designed by Carneal and Johnston and built in 1912. A Beaux Arts-style building, it has a basement arcade, limestone veneer at the first floor creating a *piano nobile* effect, a Classical cornice, a roofline balustrade, and elaborate window treatment. The Brooke is unusual on Monument Avenue in its almost institutional appearance, its large flat facade relieved only by a one-story entrance porch and small balconies at the third floor. W. Creed Davis bought the land for No. 2215 in 1909, but held onto it for three years before undertaking construction. Carneal was Davis's partner in the building-supply company of Sitterding-Carneal-Davis; Frederick Sitterding was the president of several real estate organizations, including the Brook Turnpike Company, the German-American Building and Loan Corporation, and the Highland Park Company. George Priddy was the contractor for the Brooke. In 1916 Davis sold it to T. Garnett Tabb, repurchasing the property in 1917 as the Davis Brothers Inc., and selling again in 1919. The building was sold at auction in 1934 for \$30,000 after the owners defaulted, and it changed hands several times before 1966, when the present owner bought it.

At the end of the block, on the southeast corner at Strawberry Street, is another unusual apartment complex. Built by 1926, the Rixey Court Apartments at No. 2235 are more glamorous than the Colonial Revival styles dominating the block (fig. 51). The building was designed by architect Bascom J. Rowlett, clearly for an upscale clientele: only three tenants occupied three floors fronting 50' on Monument; six more units received an Addison Street address. Rixey Court is primarily a Mediterranean Revival design, but like the Brooke it incorporates some Beaux Arts elements that lend it an urban formality. Unlike the Brooke, however, the charm of Rixey Court lies in its three-dimensional facade, with two pavilions flanking a central massing that steps back from arcaded porch to balcony to elliptical bay. The apartments are white stucco, with a low hipped roof and a decorative cornice. The suggestion of rusticated ashlar is made on the center bay and is carried through in the two chimneys.

Manie Y. Lipscomb bought the land for Rixey Court in 1923 for \$17,850 from William H. Palmer. She lived there through the 1920s, but in 1937 she defaulted on her \$60,000 deed of trust. The property was bought for \$42,500 by William A. Moncure as a trustee for Mary D. Barksdale, three decades after he acquired the property for No. 2204. Moncure sold it to Randolph Hunter Barksdale in 1947, who held the property until 1972. Dr. W. W. Rixey is listed as a resident in 1928; in 1929 Fannie L. Rixey boarded with Manie Lipscomb.

The last building constructed on the block was the most monumental: the First Church of Christ Scientist, at No. 2201 on the southwest corner of Monument Avenue and Allison Street. A Neoclassical stone temple, it has a five-bay facade fronting 90' on the avenue. Two-story engaged columns flank the entrance, with pilasters framing the side doors. A pediment sits above the entrance, with the words "GOD IS LOVE" engraved below. The name of the church is engraved in the flat front parapet. The church, built in the 1930s, separates itself from the rest of the block with a greater setback and an empty lot on the west side. The architect, Marcellus Wright, was one of the trustees of the church.

Sources of Information:

Richmond City Directories.

Richmond Building Permits: 808 (2204 Monument); 1309 (2206 Monument); 1350 (2216 Monument); 1535 (2218 Monument); 598 (2220 Monument); 3572 (2230 Monument); 3451 (2234 Monument); 3684 (2205-07 Monument); 1446 (2209-11 Monument); 967 (2213 Monument); 2498 (2215 Monument); 4953 (2217-23); 4320 (2225 Monument); 3198 (2227-29 Monument); 12627 (2235 Monument).

Deed books: 2200 Monument: 189B/359, 193A/410, 425B/163, 440B/163, 596C/181, 763/39; 2208 Monument: 131A/248, 188A/4, 187A/449, 193B/333, 203D/50, 420D/208, 449C/332, 614B/644, 730/1715; 2226 Monument: 144C/316, 186A/42, 193A/364, 248A/45, 248C/230, 250D/368, WB23/254, WB30/27, 435B/214, 509A/385, 509A/287, 512D/179, 532A/33, 16/283, 248/339; 2211 Monument: 200D/172, 207C/499; 2215 Monument: 184C/15, 185A/338, 195B/429, 200C/387, 241C/218, 247B/56, 257A/318, 274/149, 315C/458, 357B/411, 390A/141, 403C/296, 411A/149, 440D/64, 533D/38, 591B/544, 636D/636, 642C/159; 2217 Monument: 213A/162, 248D/411, 275/22, 516D/539, 526C/278, 565C/459, 586B/231, 594C/242, 679D/53, 685B/332, 758/602, 812/1614; 2227-29 Monument: 188B/41, 188A/113, 200D/172, 208A/46, 210D/433, 212C/439, 220D/475, 229B/331, 397C/52, 409D/549, 453A/142, 526B/439, 575B/ 577, 631D/352, 722/689; 2235 Monument: 299B/73, 406B/125, 476/547, 679A/1, 760/1661, 9/565.

Project Information:

This documentation of Monument Avenue was undertaken in summer 1991 by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), a division of the National Park Service, Washington, D.C., under the general direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief. The project was sponsored by the Monument Avenue Centennial Committee, Millie Jones and Ceci Amrhein, co-chairpersons, and Sylvia Summers, director of development. Funding was provided by the Historic Monument Avenue and Fan District Foundation, the City of Richmond, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, the Historic Richmond Foundation, the F. M. Kirby Foundation, Inc., and the Robert G. Cabell III and Maude Morgan Cabell Foundation.

HABS senior historian Alison K. Hoagland directed the project and edited this historical report. Kathy Edwards (University of California at Berkeley) was the field supervisor; Esme Howard (Yale University) and Toni Prawl (University of Missouri) were the team historians. Jonathan C. Spodek, AIA, produced architectural drawings and Jack Boucher took the photographs. The team's work resulted in the publication Monument Avenue, of which the report on this one block forms only a small portion. Researchers are referred to that volume for more information.

ADDENDUM TO:
2200 BLOCK MONUMENT AVENUE
Richmond
Independent City
Virginia

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